

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Hyde School District  
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2001-2002**

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**Dates of On Site Visit:** March 20-21, 2002

**Date of Report:** May 17, 2002

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This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Office of Special Education. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

<b>Promising Practice</b>	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
<b>Maintenance</b>	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
<b>Needs Improvement</b>	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
<b>Out of Compliance</b>	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
<b>Not applicable</b>	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

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<b>Principle 1 – General Supervision</b>
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

**Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- ? District's comprehensive plan
- ? Student handbook
- ? Newspaper article
- ? District-Head Start agreement
- ? Child find article

- ? Teacher certification
- ? Student screening data
- ? Student file reviews
- ? Teacher Assistant Team information
- ? District's special education forms
- ? Table I
- ? District's budget information
- ? Progress indicator information
- ? Table D
- ? All surveys administered
- ? STAARS report
- ? State and functional standards
- ? Table C
- ? School calendar
- ? Teacher-District negotiated agreement
- ? School board policy book
- ? Teacher assistant training budget
- ? Professional development plan
- ? School newsletter
- ? Parent advisory committee minutes

### **Promising Practices**

The Hyde School District has an agreement with the area Head Start agency in providing joint services to students. The district provides the afternoon of the first Tuesday of the month as inservice time to all teaching staff. The district also provides the opportunity to all teaching staff, tuition reimbursement for a maximum of three undergraduate or graduate credits per year.

### **Maintenance**

The Hyde School District has a lack of referral documentation for students referred for speech-language evaluations, but due to staff changes, the referral documentation is present for new referred students. The areas of child find, general procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by school district, and suspension and expulsion rates are all in the area of maintenance for the Hyde School District.

### **Needs Improvement**

The Hyde School District has begun to chart the SAT-9 results and will begin a system to chart percentages of the goals met each year for decision-making purposes. The district has made an effort to involve parents in training opportunities, but needs to do more to involve/train parents.

### **Not Applicable**

The steering committee concluded the area of students placed in private schools is not applicable to this district. There are no private schools within the district's boundaries.

## **Validation Results**

### **Promising Practices**

The Hyde School District has a written agreement with Head Start to assist with the provision of services for preschool students in need of special education. The monitoring team concluded that the agreement does not meet the requirements of a promising practice. The district's agreement does not meet the requirements of an innovative, high-quality programming or instructional practice.

The district provides the afternoon of the first Tuesday of the month for inservice. This time has been used for some inservice time, but has not been devoted as a specific time for teachers to collaborate or inservice in the area of special education. The monitoring team concluded that the monthly inservice practice does not meet the requirements of a promising practice.

The Hyde School District also provides all teaching staff tuition for a maximum of three graduate or undergraduate college credits per year. This is an agreement between the school district and the teacher's union through the negotiation process. Even though this is a benefit for teaching staff to acquire credit hours at no cost yearly, it does not meet the criteria of a promising practice.

### **Maintenance**

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as maintenance for general supervision as concluded by the steering committee. The Hyde School District has a lack of referral documentation for students referred for speech-language evaluations, but due to staff changes, the monitoring team validated referrals for speech-language evaluations are now being documented appropriately.

### **Areas that need improvement**

The monitoring team validated the findings of the steering committee that the Hyde School District has begun to chart the SAT-9 results and will begin a system to chart percentages of the goals met each year for decision-making purposes. In twelve student files reviewed, nine students were taking the state and district wide assessments with no modifications or with modifications as indicated by the individual student's IEP. The other three students were taking the alternate assessment, STAARS.

The monitoring team also validated the school district does not have a system of training or involving parents in the training with school district staff as identified as a needs improvement for general supervision as concluded by the steering committee. The monitoring team validated through the parent surveys and interviews with staff, that the district has not involved parents in staff inservices or trainings.

## **Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education**

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- ? Comprehensive plan
- ? District's budget
- ? District-Head Start agreement
- ? Screening ads in newspaper
- ? All surveys administered

- ? School board's minutes
- ? Student file reviews
- ? Table C
- ? District handbooks

### **Maintenance**

The steering committee concluded that the district has necessary policies and procedures in place for the provision of FAPE. The steering committee also concluded the district is providing a free, appropriate public education to students. The district has policies and procedures in place for the provision of FAPE and expelled or suspended students.

## **Validation Results**

### **Maintenance**

The monitoring team validated the conclusions of the steering committee that the necessary policies and procedures are in place for FAPE and suspended or expelled students. These are an area of maintenance for the Hyde School District.

<h2><b>Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation</b></h2>
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A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

## **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- ? Comprehensive plan
- ? All surveys administered
- ? District special education forms
- ? Personnel certificates
- ? Parent information forms
- ? Student file reviews
- ? North East Mental Health contract
- ? Table G
- ? Parent rights brochure and video
- ? Table H
- ? SAT-9 and DACS results
- ? Student portfolios
- ? Table L
- ? Table M

### **Maintenance**

The school district has policies and procedures in place for appropriate evaluation, qualified personnel to administer the evaluations, adequate parental input into the evaluation process, following all evaluation timelines, and written referrals for all areas of special education. The district is assessing students in all areas of the suspected disability. These evaluations are all multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary.

## **Validation Results**

### **Maintenance**

The monitoring team validated the school district ensures parental input into the evaluation process and that parental permission is obtained before the evaluation is initiated. The monitoring team also validated that the evaluations were being completed within the appropriate timelines or that extensions were obtained.

### **Areas out of compliance**

#### **ARSD 24:05:25:04 Evaluation procedures**

The monitoring team concluded that the Hyde School District is out of compliance in the area of evaluation procedures. The monitoring team reviewed fourteen student files and found only one student file contained adequate functional evaluation information. In interview with the four special education staff, only one staff member was able to briefly explain the functional evaluation process. It was evident to the monitoring team that the special education staff lacked the knowledge of how to perform a functional evaluation of the student and how to incorporate that information into the IEP process.

## **Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards**

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

## **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- ? Comprehensive plan
- ? FILE system
- ? Staff job descriptions
- ? Newspaper articles
- ? Table L
- ? Table M
- ? Student file reviews
- ? Parent rights brochure
- ? Student files
- ? All surveys completed

### **Maintenance**

The Hyde School District: indicated confidentiality, adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation and complaint procedures/due process hearings are areas of maintenance.

### **Areas that need improvement**

The Hyde School District indicated there was no existing policy for the destruction of records. The district has since written an article for the local newspaper that will be published each spring for the records to be destroyed during the summer.

## **Validation Results**

### **Maintenance**

The monitoring team validated the areas of confidentiality, adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation and complaint procedures/due process hearings are all areas of maintenance. The monitoring team validated that in all student files reviewed, parental consent was obtained before the evaluation was initiated.

The monitoring team validated the Hyde School District does have a policy in the district's comprehensive plan regarding the destruction of special education records. In interview, the special education director indicated it had been several years since special education records had been destroyed. A public notice has been drafted for the purpose of record destruction. This notice will be published in the local newspaper later this spring with the destruction of the appropriate special education records occurring in the summer.

## **Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program**

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- ? All surveys conducted
- ? Comprehensive plan
- ? High school schedule
- ? Project skills
- ? Student file reviews
- ? District's budget
- ? District's calendar
- ? Staff contracts

### **Promising Practices**

The Hyde School District has creative instructional practices at the high school level by the high school special education teacher and aide providing services in the regular education classes. The speech therapist works with students in the speech room and also provides services in the classroom. One of the

special education teachers is in the junior high math class and the elementary special education aide assists in various classes (computers).

The district also has a promising practice in accountability. The elementary special education teacher went to a workshop entitled “Practical Strategies to Help Special Education Teachers Objectively Assess IEP Progress”. We will be implementing some of the techniques for data collection and assessment of the student’s progress on their IEP.

### **Maintenance**

The steering committee concluded the areas of extended school year, informing students and parents of the progress made by the student, secondary transition, student participation in extra curricular activities and all content of the IEP are all areas of maintenance.

### **Areas that need improvement**

The high school special education staff need to better inform the general education staff of who is on an IEP and what the student’s needs are. The special education teacher’s data is collected but needs to be documented. We are looking at possible ways of collecting the data efficiently.

## **Validation Results**

### **Promising Practice**

The monitoring team concluded, through the validation process, that the Hyde School District’s creative instructional practices of the inclusion of students with special needs into the regular classroom with supports from the resource room staff or speech therapist does not meet the criteria of a promising practice. The criteria of a promising practice are an innovative, high-quality programming or instructional practice.

### **Maintenance**

The monitoring team validated the Hyde School District has the areas of extended school year and student participation in extra curricular activities as areas of maintenance.

### **Areas that need improvement**

The monitoring team validated the Hyde School District’s special education department has no formal process to inform the general education staff of the students on IEPs and the content of the IEPs which is an area that needs improvement. In interview, special education staff indicated they verbally told each general education teacher what the student is working on in special education and what modifications are listed on the IEP. No written communication is given to the general education teacher from the special education department staff with consistency. The monitoring team validated the Hyde School District special education teachers are not collecting data efficiently. The elementary special education teacher and the speech-language pathologist are beginning a new documentation system for a student’s progression on the annual and short-term instructional goals of the IEP. The new documentation system is not district-wide and would benefit the other special education staff to implement such a system.

### **Areas out of compliance**

ARSD 24:05:27:01.02 Development, review, and revision of individualized education program.

The monitoring team determined the Hyde School District is out of compliance with parental input into the IEP. The monitoring team reviewed fourteen student files and eight were found to have no parental input into the IEP development process. In interview, special education staff indicated the lack of attendance in the high school students' parents at IEP meetings.

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03 Content of individualized education program.

The monitoring team determined the Hyde School District is out of compliance with the following areas of content of the individual education program (IEP). The district does not ensure the appropriate IEP content for the present levels of performance of the student and include how the disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum. The monitoring team reviewed eleven student files with eight not meeting the criteria of stating how the student's disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum and the functional assessment information. The team noted the present levels of performance for students contained test scores with no correlation to the general curriculum, described the student's study habits and student's grades in current coursework. An example of one student's present levels of performance page had each teacher listed with their opinion of how the student was performing in the class, but lacked data to support the statements. Weaknesses were listed as written language and grammar but lacked the functional assessment information to tie this to the general education curriculum. The test scores of three assessments were listed with no correlation to the general curriculum and the strengths and weaknesses of the student. Another example of a portion of present level of performance stated the student had not been putting forth his best effort in the area of written language and that he needs to work on this area to develop these skills.

The monitoring team determined the annual goals are not a statement that may be measured and include benchmarks or short-term objectives that relate to meeting the student's needs that result from the student's disability to enable the student to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum. The monitoring team reviewed six files and determined five lacked appropriate annual and short-term instructional goals. The annual goals were too broad and non-descriptive. The annual goal, "(the student) will write effectively for different audiences and specific purposes", was used for two different students. This annual goal is broad and lacks the measurable content as the short-term instructional goals were used in both of these cases instead of benchmarks. An example of the short-term instructional goal is, "(the student) will use appropriate mechanics, usage, and conventions of language 8 out of 10 times".

The student's parents must be regularly informed, at least as often as parents are informed of their nondisabled student's progress. The student's progress toward the annual goals and the extent to which that progress is sufficient to enable the student to achieve the goals by the end of the year. The monitoring team determined that progress is not being documented district-wide on the educational goals and objectives/benchmarks page of the IEP in all files reviewed. The monitoring team reviewed thirteen files with eight missing sufficient documentation of progress reporting to the students' parents. At the middle and high school levels, little to no information was reported on the student's progress on the annual or short-term instructional goals of the student's IEP to the parents. An example of the progress report dated March 18, 2002 stated, "(the student)'s English teacher reports that he has been ill prepared for his lessons. He lacks motivation. It is difficult to determine (the student's) abilities because he doesn't do his homework. His grade represents his effort. His grade this nine weeks is a 47% or an F". Another example of a progress report dated April 25, 2000 stated, "(the student) has become lax about getting his work done on time. He's not using study hall and class time as well as he had been. He needs to decide that he's willing to put forth the time and effort. Once he does this, he won't be so far behind on his homework". The students' special education teachers wrote both of these progress reports.

ARSD 24:05:27:13.02 Transition services.



The monitoring team determined the Hyde School District is out of compliance in the area of transition services for students with disabilities ages 14-21. Of eight student files reviewed for transition services, five lacked a list of the complete coursework for students through grade twelve. In one student file, the course of study listed for the eleventh grade was American history, English III and electives and the twelfth grade course of study was American government, English IV and electives. The course description must be more descriptive than what was listed. It should include the names of all classes to be taken by the student. The transition plans were not a set of coordinated activities with an outcome-oriented process. The documentation lacked an initiate date and the responsible person listed for each activity.

## **Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment**

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

### **Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**

Data sources used:

- ? Comprehensive plan
- ? Student file reviews
- ? All surveys conducted

### **Maintenance**

The Hyde School District has a maintenance effort in the least restrictive environment.

### **Validation Results**

#### **Areas out of compliance**

##### **Issues requiring immediate attention**

The monitoring team determined the Hyde School District must reconvene IEP meetings for five students and determine the extent to which supplementary services, such as resource room or itinerant instruction should be provided in conjunction with regular class placement. The IEP team must specify the description of the services, the amount of the services and the location of the services.

##### **ARSD 24:05:28:02 Continuum of alternative placements.**

The monitoring team determined the Hyde School District is out of compliance with the issue of least restrictive environment. During the IEP process, the IEP team must consider the continuum of placements from the least restrictive to the most restrictive environment. Through this process the IEP team shall determine the extent to which related services are required in order for the student to benefit from the program. The IEP team shall provide for supplementary services, such as resource room or itinerant instruction, to be provided in conjunction with regular class placement. The monitoring team determined in five of five student files reviewed, that special education is not being provided to the students. The documentation on the students' IEPs under special education to be provided states, "(the student) attends the classroom at all times with modifications to his work". Two of the students' IEPs

indicate that the resource teacher will consult with the classroom teacher 15 minutes once a week. These IEPs do not indicate any student to special education staff contact. The documentation lacked the special education services to be provided and the specific description of the services, amount of services and the location of the services. In interview, the high school special education teacher noted that he and the special education paraprofessional went into the general education classrooms to help the students, but indicated that they did not see the students on a daily basis. The monitoring team was not able to clarify if the services being provided to the students with special needs were tutoring for the student or actually implementing the students' annual and short-term instructional goals.